

Board of Education Agenda Item

Item: Q

Date: September 22, 2004

Topic: First Review of Response to a Recommendation from the 2003 Student Advisory Committee Regarding Student Diversity

Presenter: Dr. Cynthia A. Cave, Director of Student Services

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Origin:

☐ Topic presented for information only (no board action required)

☐ Board review required by

☐ State or federal law or regulation

☐ Board of Education regulation

☒ Other: The Board of Education's Student Advisory Committee Recommendation

☒ Action requested at this meeting: Accept for first review the establishment of the Leadership in Multicultural Education Award

☐ Action requested at future meeting: _____ (date)

Previous Review/Action:

☐ No previous board review/action

☒ Previous review/action

date April 28, 2004, meeting

action The Board of Education Student Advisory Committee recommended that the board develop an award that recognizes schools that promote cultural diversity.

Background Information:

Increasingly, Virginia public schools are more diverse, and this trend will continue to grow. The ultimate focus is not about diversity itself, but more about understanding how differences affect the ways students achieve in school. To build an appreciation of differences in a school, it is important to promote understanding of values and beliefs endemic to various cultures.

During the 2003-04 school year, the Student Advisory Committee of the Board of Education recommended that an award program be developed for schools that make an effort to promote understanding of cultural diversity throughout the school. As a result, the proposed Board of Education's Leadership in Multicultural Education Award has been developed.

Multicultural education includes, but is not limited to, strategies and programs that promote a school climate that is culturally responsive to all students. Diversity forums, cultural presentations, staff development training, and collaboration between school and community groups are just a few examples of effective approaches.

The proposed Board of Education's Leadership in Multicultural Education Award would be given to schools and school divisions. Recipients will be presented with a certificate of recognition by the Board of Education for effectively providing educational opportunities that promote an understanding and responsiveness to cultural diversity. Their programs will be highlighted on the Web site of the Virginia Department of Education.

Summary of Major Elements:

A description of the award is attached. Criteria for the selection of a school or school division would include:

- Continuous development of strategies that eliminate barriers to student success
- Sustained activities that improve school climate
- Ongoing activities that eliminate bias
- Development of innovative programs that promote cultural competency

Superintendent's Recommendation:

The Superintendent of Public Instruction recommends that the Board of Education accept establishment of this award for first review.

Impact on Resources:

Minimal

Timetable for Further Review/Action:

Final review for adoption of the Multicultural Leadership in Education Award is scheduled for the October Board of Education meeting.

Leadership in Multicultural Education Award

Increasingly, Virginia public schools are more diverse, and this trend will continue to grow. The ultimate focus is not about diversity itself, but more about the impact differences have on how students achieve in school. To have a successful culturally pluralistic school community, it is important to promote understanding of the values and beliefs endemic to various cultures.

During the 2003-04 school year, the Student Advisory Committee of the Board of Education recommended to the board that an award program be developed for schools that make an effort to educate students about cultural diversity. Understanding cultural diversity is fundamental to the processes, content, and outcomes of schooling. Subsequently, learning how to interact in a culturally diverse society should start in school.

The Virginia State Board of Education has established a Leadership in Multicultural Education Award for schools and school divisions. Throughout the year, recipients will be presented with a certificate of recognition at Board of Education meetings. The programs that received recognition for promoting an understanding and responsiveness to cultural diversity in Virginia schools will be highlighted on the Web site of the Virginia Department of Education.

Criteria for Selection

- Continuous development of strategies that eliminate barriers to student success
- Sustained activities that improve school climate
- Ongoing activities that eliminate bias
- Development of innovative programs that promote cultural competency

Multicultural education includes, but is not limited to, strategies and programs that promote a school climate that is culturally responsive to all students. Diversity forums, cultural presentations, staff development training, and collaboration between school and community groups are just a few examples of effective approaches.

How to Nominate

Nominations will be accepted throughout the year. The selection committee, to include representatives from school divisions, the Virginia Department of Education, and a nationally recognized cultural competency trainer/consultant, will meet quarterly to select an award recipient.

Nominations should include:

- Information about the number of students and school(s) affected as well as demographics of the school(s) and the student population
- A description of the program or strategy implemented
- A description of how the program or strategy promotes an understanding of cultural diversity within the school community or promotes a school climate that is culturally responsive to all students
- Contact information for the nominator, including mailing address, telephone number, and e-mail address
- A description of outcomes such as data documenting results, letters of support, publications, or newspaper coverage